

# **Young Men as Fathers**

## **Topic and Directional Statements**

### **COURSE GOAL:**

The **Young Men as Fathers** curriculum will provide 60 hours of culturally sensitive parenting education to wards in order to increase and enhance their child rearing activities, knowledge and skills. The curriculum shall respect each participant's shared cultural input in order to bring into awareness the differences, similarities, and uniqueness of each culture.

### **Introduction**

This curriculum has been developed with input from Youth Authority wards and staff, parenting education experts, and community advisors. Instructors are urged to follow the course curriculum as designed, but are encouraged to modify and adapt other resources consistent with the course goal in order to meet the unique needs of each participant group. Particular attention was given to meeting the needs of the Youth Authority's culturally diverse population. Special care was taken to include a comment within each section reminding the instructor to use relevant, contemporary materials and guest speakers who can present the information with cultural sensitivity.

### **TOPIC AND DIRECTIONAL STATEMENTS:**

#### **I. Family Issues**

##### **A. Who am I?**

We learn to be a parent through the experiences of our life and the role modeling of others. The intent of understanding "Who I am", is to explore the elements of our life experiences that prepare us to be parents. In addition, it will help us identify those learned behaviors that need to be reinforced or changed in order to help us become effective parents. *The teacher shall help each participant identify his individual culture, its unique qualities, and its influence on his life.*

##### **B. Value identification.**

The concept behind addressing personal values is to allow a process through which participants will discover their values and beliefs in regard to individual worth, sense of being, family concept, and behavioral patterns and how this information is transmitted from parent to child. *Cultural variations in value patterns shall be addressed.*

##### **C. What is a "family"?**

This section will address the variety of definitions used to describe a "family." The idea is to teach participants that families are a group of individuals who form a cohesive relationship, a sense of belonging. Family members share a common bond that could be a direct blood relationship, a blended family relationship, or a surrogate family as in the case of foster or group home relationships. Families generally share common values, goals, and feelings; there is usually some type of historical sense about the relationship. Families generally have some type of hierarchical structure that defines roles. *The teacher shall help the participants identify variations in family definitions according to culture.*

D. Roles and responsibilities of parents (modeling).

The purpose of this section is to help each participant understand that parental behavior imparts values whether intended or not, e.g. a child taken along on gang related outings will soon come to believe that the gang lifestyle is O.K. and acceptable. *The teacher shall help each participant explore the range of family roles particularly as they differ from one culture to another.*

E. Cross-generation issues (differences; positive and negative).

This section is important in that it will allow a teacher led discussion exploring the consequences of child rearing by grandparents, which may be both positive and negative, e.g. grandparent's increased maturity, stability, and experience in child care vs. diminished physical capability, lack of appropriate coping strategies and the inability to transmit contemporary values. *The teacher will identify cultural variations in how we relate to generation differences within participants' families and those cultures not represented in the classroom.*

F. Love Means Communicating by Doing.

This section will focus on teaching the importance of positive communication in fostering a loving and caring environment for the child and its parents. The participants will learn to openly express thoughts and feelings on a variety of levels: parent to parent, parent to child, child to child. *Cultural variations in communication patterns shall be addressed.*

G. Domestic violence: modeling teaches violence.

This section will focus on physical, mental and emotional violence against significant others and children and how it breaks down a wholesome domestic environment. Participants will explore power and control, role modeling, low self esteem, and stress management, etc. as contributors to domestic violence. *The teacher shall encourage participants to explore culturally relevant variations of accepted moors and norms and then provide socially appropriate alternatives for discussion.*

## II. Human Growth and Development (Physical, Social, and Emotional).

"Human growth and development" will cover the stages and elements of the physical, social, and emotional development of children. Fathers need opportunities, information, and encouragement to establish an identity as a nurturing care-taker of the child. The following sub-headings encompass stages of cognitive and affective development. Teachers are encouraged to interweave all three spheres of development (physical, social, and emotional) and include the inherent development of the care giver himself. It is also important that the concept of motor, adaptive, language, personal, and social milestones be explained as merely guidelines for measuring development. The following information should be covered:

### A. Sexuality

This section is intended to provide participants with information about human sexuality. The participants will learn to identify issues and share information with their children about human sexual development. *The teacher shall facilitate a discussion of the above issues in an unbiased and culturally sensitive manner incorporating facts with participant input.*

### B. Child care/baby sitters

This section will identify qualities and guidelines for locating and enlisting child care. Issues such as safety, dependability, and quality of care will be addressed. *The teacher should lead a discussion of cultural issues in choosing a child care provider.*

### C. Pregnancy

Prenatal care	Danger signs
Prenatal communication	Support for the mother
Prenatal infant growth	Sibling adjustment
Dad's feelings, etc.	

### D. Birth

Child birth itself  
Dad's Role  
Mom's physical recovery  
Family bonding  
Sibling adjustment, etc.

### E. Infancy (0-12 Mos.)

Physical needs  
Milestones

Bonding and nurturing  
Siblings  
Circumcision, etc.

F. Toddlers /Preschool (1 to 5 years)

Physical needs  
Sexual/physical self exploration  
Siblings  
Initiation of social training  
Milestones  
Bonding and nurturing, etc.

G. Kindergarten/early school years (5-11 years)

Physical needs  
Milestones  
Bonding and nurturing  
Peer group influence  
Dad's role in education  
Sexual/physical curiosity with peers

H. Pre-adolescence through adolescence (11-17 years)

Physical needs	Dating/sex education
Milestones	Puberty
Peer group influence	Masturbation
Dad's role in education	Bonding and nurturing
Separation and individuation	

I. Exploring discipline

Traditionally, discipline has been viewed as a way of addressing negative child behavior. However, to discipline means to teach. This section will teach participants a variety of socially acceptable, age appropriate behavior modification techniques, approaches, and methods emphasizing child emotional and physical abuse prevention. The teacher shall address the issue of physical punishment as a perpetrator of violence in relation to child abuse laws.

*While cultural and individual differences in discipline techniques will be explored and discussed, the teacher will help each participant in making a choice as to the disciplinary method they will use with their children.*

### III. Health Issues

#### A. Perinatal Care.

This section will address the health issues surrounding lifestyle choices prior to, during, and after pregnancy, e.g., nutrition, well baby medical visits, substance usage, child birth preparation, circumcision, and breast feeding. *Each of these items is culturally sensitive and should be discussed within this context with the participants.*

#### B. Administering First Aid.

This section will provide practical, hands-on experience in basic American Red Cross first aid. *Traditional family remedies will be discussed in the context of cultural significance.*

#### C. Drug Exposed Infants.

Infants exposed to harmful substances often display a variety of physical, social, and emotional defects. This section will explore the effects of parental substance use on fetal and infant development. Discussions in this section will include, but not be limited to, developmental delays, lowered intelligence, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and other physical abnormalities.

#### D. Nutrition.

The intent of this section is to provide basic nutrition training and a discussion of the effects of malnutrition on the unborn and young child. The focus on a two part presentation is preferred, i.e., nutrition and healthy food preparation. *A focus on cultural differences will be essential to facilitate the discussion of food selection preparation within the various ethnic groups.*

E. Family Cleanliness.

Infant care is easy and fun. However, it is not automatic. This section will help participants become familiar with the importance of infant cleanliness and the products available to assist one in achieving this goal. In addition, the instructor shall stress the importance of parental modeling of proper hygiene.

F. Exceptional Children.

Children identified as exceptional (disabled or gifted) have special needs and require additional attention to help them achieve to their fullest potential. This portion of the program exposes participants to the possibility of rearing children with special needs. *The teacher will address cultural differences in the treatment and acceptance of exceptional children.*

G. Supervision and Safety.

The value of life becomes more obvious when you have children. The goal of this section is to identify for the potential caregiver those parts of everyday life which create hazardous situations for children. Discussions will cover, but not be limited to, home safety, playground safety, poison control, car seats, weapons, drugs and alcohol, and other potentially dangerous household items and situations. The teacher shall emphasize the necessity for visual supervision of children. *The teacher will lead discussions of culturally unique activities or household items that may pose a risk to a child.*



#### **IV. Incarceration and Beyond**

##### **A. Impact of incarceration on the family.**

The intent behind this topic is to generate discussion and identify those events (developmental or otherwise) that have been missed by the incarcerated father, the child, or significant other and what impact his absence has had on himself and the family as a unit. For example, the added monetary burden of sending packages, traveling and making phone calls to and from institutions, missing significant childhood milestones, lack of consistency in the child's life and the challenge of re-entering the family after release. *The teacher shall address the cultural systems that not only step in to help hold the family together, but ultimately raise the child, e.g., extended family.*

##### **B. Family Planning.**

This section will address the level of joint commitment and responsibility necessary for planning and maintaining a healthy family, i.e., sex education, contraception, safe sex, adoption, and abortion information. *The teacher shall facilitate a discussion of the above issues in an unbiased and culturally sensitive manner incorporating facts with participant input.*

##### **C. Legal Rights and Responsibilities.**

Participants will be presented with information about the legal rights of parents as well as the responsibilities of parenthood. Participants will be provided with information about coping with other father figures in the child's life, child support, legally establishing paternity, and child and spouse abuse laws.

D. Long range life goals for parent(s) and family.

One's goals in life are a product of one's past experiences and current beliefs. This section is designed to help participants write realistic life goals for parenting and family living. The teacher shall direct a discussion on goal setting and writing. *The participant's individual culture will influence his final exercise product.*

E. Family support resources.

This section is designed to provide a working list of community resources sensitive to the participant's community of origin, ethnic and cultural background. Emphasis will be placed on "working the system" with the goal of gaining access to the resources provided. The teacher shall conduct exercises that develop participant skills in letter writing, phone directory use, and personal presentation before agency personnel. *The instructor shall teach the above in an effort to identify and overcome any cultural distrust of community agencies.*

F. Transition from father to "DAD".

This section is meant to be a celebratory group discussion summarizing the "feel" of the program and reiterating that all the knowledge and parenting skills in the world are worthless without a conscious commitment to being a "DAD". *The teacher shall emphasize the difference between fathering a child and raising a child; being a DAD. He or she shall remind participants that we are all encased in culture and that we must be conscious of its impact in our everyday living.*